

Press release: Significant fine for water company following hazardous chemical leak

On 19 April 2018, at Derby Crown Court, sitting in Nottingham, Severn Trent Water Limited was fined £350,000, ordered to pay Environment Agency costs of £68,003, as well as a victim surcharge of £120.

An estimated 30,000 dead fish and 5km of damaged ecology along the River Amber led to proceedings brought against Severn Trent Water Limited following a pollution incident.

On 1 November 2015, the Environment Agency received reports of several hundred dead fish in the River Amber in Derbyshire and, following a search of the area, and discussions with Severn Trent Water employees, the source of the pollution was found to be a release of sodium hydroxide from the Ogston Water Treatment works, operated by Severn Trent Water, into the river.

Severn Trent Water identified that a leak within a chamber at the Treatment works had led to the contents becoming contaminated with sodium hydroxide, which was then washed through the road gully into the River Amber via an outfall pipe.

The pollution had a significant negative impact on the fish and invertebrate populations within the River Amber. The Environment Agency has been monitoring the natural recovery of the river ecology over the last two years. Monitoring has shown that whilst there has been some improvements, something resembling a full recovery is not expected until the summer of this year.

In passing sentence, His Honour Judge Smith found that:

It beggars belief that a company of the size and expertise of Severn Trent Water had no policy whatsoever in respect of potential incidents arising in connection with their dosing chamber, either at this treatment works or indeed at any others throughout the UK. To have no policy whatsoever when dangerous chemicals could have leaked out in any number of ways is highly negligent. The size and success of Severn Trent makes it even more astonishing.

In mitigation Severn Trent expressed regret and apologises for the incident. The company co-operated fully with the investigation and contributed £228,000 to the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust.

Speaking after the case, an Environment Agency officer involved with the investigation said:

This is a significant fine imposed on Severn Trent Water Limited for causing pollution. I hope it sends a strong message that it is far more cost effective to avoid these incidents, as we will continue to take companies and individuals to task where they ignore their responsibilities.

Pollution causes damage to the environment and river ecology, in this case sodium hydroxide with a concentration of 20% amounts to a hazardous chemical and the leak affected 5km of the River Amber and killed approximately 30,000 fish and damaged other wildlife.

We encourage anyone who sees suspected pollution to call our incident hotline 0800 90 80 70 so we can act to reduce damage, investigate and in serious cases take enforcement action.

News story: NDA announces new Chair of Sellafield Ltd Board

Lorraine has extensive experience in senior roles across a range of international companies and high-profile public sector organisations, including Thames Water, the Olympic Delivery Authority and London and Continental Railways Ltd. As Chair of Sellafield Ltd, Lorraine will report directly to David Peattie.

In her role as Chair of the Radioactive Waste Management Advisory Council, Lorraine Baldry has already gained valuable experience of working within the nuclear industry.

David Peattie said:

I am extremely pleased to welcome Lorraine as Chair of the Sellafield Ltd Board. Her contribution will be valuable to Sellafield Ltd, as it continues to make progress in cleaning up the hazards left from the earliest days of the UK's nuclear industry.

Her unique blend of experience, from a diverse range of organisations in the private and public sector, will help Sellafield provide a continued focus on safety while making decommissioning progress and delivering value for the UK taxpayer.

Lorraine Baldry said:

I am privileged to be given this opportunity, as Chair of Sellafield Ltd, to help the organisation in its mission to clean up some of the most complex nuclear facilities in Europe.

The next few years will be an important time for Sellafield as we look towards the end of nuclear fuel reprocessing and making accelerated progress in decommissioning and hazard reduction.

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[News story: Sham supervision by EU lawyers in providing immigration advice](#)

Mr Tariq Hussain, aged 34 years of Livesy Street, Rochdale, Lancashire, was, on 16 April 2018, fined £600 and ordered to pay £1999 compensation at Manchester Crown Court, having pleaded guilty to 3 charges of providing unregulated immigration advice.

Mr Hussain was the company director of Immigration Assistance Services Ltd, Milkstone Road, Rochdale where clients met him to discuss their immigration issues. Mr Hussain had misrepresented his company as being qualified to provide immigration advice and services by virtue of being supervised by a number of unqualified persons. Mr Hussain stated he had been provided supervision at any one time by three companies, including one based in Malta, another in Peterborough and a London firm headed by a lawyer based in Romania. The prosecution was brought by the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner as the claimed supervision was a sham. Despite this being highlighted to Tariq Hussain, he, nonetheless, chose to continue to seek to provide immigration advice whilst exploiting 'Surinder Singh' applications to the Irish authorities.

In sentencing, HHJ Lawton, said, "You set up a company providing immigration advice and by your plea today acknowledge your neglect in the supervision claimed. You put an artificial gloss on your claim to supervision to enable your company to provide immigration advice. You have pleaded guilty and I bear in mind persons have lost money"

Speaking about the decision, the Deputy Immigration Services Commissioner, Ian Leigh, said, "We have clear standards outlining what we expect in terms of the fitness and competence of regulated advisers. Tariq Hussain chose to operate outside the law. I am delighted with the outcome of this case, and I hope this sends a clear message to other people considering providing immigration advice under sham supervision arrangements. Either act within the law or you will find yourself in court."

Press release: Charity regulator calls for information to its inquiry into The Save the Children Fund

On 4 April 2018 the regulator [opened a statutory inquiry](#) into the charity over concerns about its handling, reporting and response to serious allegations of misconduct and harassment involving senior staff members in 2012 and 2015.

Among the issues under inquiry is the extent to which the trustees have ensured that any misconduct allegations, complaints or incidents received by the charity since 1 January 2016 have been appropriately handled.

The Commission would like to hear from anyone with information which is relevant to the inquiry including misconduct allegations, complaints or incidents involving the charity and has set up a dedicated email address for anyone wishing to contact or submit evidence to the inquiry. The email address is savethechildreninquiry@charitycommission.gsi.gov.uk.

The inquiry is confined to the issues of safeguarding in the context of misconduct and harassment of the charity's staff; it is not examining safeguarding in the context of the charity's programme delivery for beneficiaries.

It is the Commission's policy, after it has concluded an inquiry, to publish a report detailing what issues the inquiry looked at, what actions were undertaken as part of the inquiry and what the outcomes were. Reports of previous inquiries by the Commission are available on [GOV.UK](#).

Ends

Notes to editors

1. The Charity Commission is the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales. To find out more about our work, see the [about us](#) page on GOV.UK.
2. Search for charities on our [check charity tool](#).